

REMARKS

Claims 14, 19, 25, 28-29, 47-50 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-3, 5-18, 20-24, 26-27, and 30-46 are canceled, claims 14, 19, 25, and 28-29 are amended, and new claims 47-50 are added. No new matter is added.

Section 112, Second Paragraph

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 12-16, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for containing asserted informalities. Applicants believe that this rejection is overcome with the above amendments to the claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 12-16, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, are respectfully requested.

Section 102 and 103 Rejections

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 5, 14, 21, 26, 27, 29-31 and 34-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by SU 494,409 ("SU"). The Office Action also rejects claims 1-3, 5-11, 17-21, 34, 36, 43-44 and 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Woodrum (U.S. Patent No. 4,914,066). These rejections are traversed as they may apply to the amended and new claims.

After removal of the hide from the body of large animals, such as cattle, buffalo, horses and pigs, the hide is generally preserved by drying or salting prior to further processing.

Due to the chemical composition of hides and fur which is favorable for bacterial and fungal growth, these goods are subject to rapid biological decomposition (rot, mold growth and mildew stains), which is associated with self-heating. They are thus

preserved before transport. Common methods of preservation include drying, dry salting, and wet salting.

In the present invention, it has been found that certain superabsorbent (co)polymers (SAP) can replace, at least partially, salt (by removing water, the salt has preservative bactericidal and fungicidal action) during dry salting treatment for absorbing moisture contained in hide and allow appropriate residual humidity. After the operation, the polymeric compound is removed from the hide.

SU 494409 only deals with a composition for improving the quality of preserved hides.

SU 494409 does not have any relation to subjecting fresh hide to dehydrating action. The SU patent focuses to the contrary on a post treatment for improving already preserved hides. Moreover, the polymers cited are not superabsorbents, the composition is in solution form (g/l) and the polymer remains on the hide.

Woodrum teaches moisture absorbing pellets useful as animal litter. The main objective is, c 1 lines 41+, to improve the overall performance of moisture absorbing particles (i.e. by using a specific composition based on bentonite and SAP). No fresh hide drying is even mentioned.

This must not be compared to the use of SAP for absorbing the internal moisture of the rawhide, where SAP has a totally different function.

In order to expedite prosecution of this application and even further clarify the scope of the presently claimed application, Applicants have amended the claims as shown above.

For at least the above reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-3, 5, 14, 21, 26, 27, 29-31 and 34-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and of claims

1-3, 5-11, 17-21, 34, 36, 43-44 and 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below to schedule a personal or telephone interview to discuss any remaining issues.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300 referencing Attorney Docket No. 024118-00013.

Respectfully submitted,



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